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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/609,123	06/27/2003	Tushar Patel	101896-178 (DEP5100)	6697
21125 7590 01/10/2008 NUTTER MCCLENNEN & FISH LLP WORLD TRADE CENTER WEST 155 SEAPORT BOULEVARD BOSTON, MA 02210-2604			EXAMINER COMSTOCK, DAVID C	
			ART UNIT 3733	PAPER NUMBER
			NOTIFICATION DATE 01/10/2008	DELIVERY MODE ELECTRONIC

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

docket@nutter.com

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/609,123

Applicant(s)

PATEL ET AL.

Examiner

David Comstock

Art Unit

3733

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 31 October 2007.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 7-21 and 23-26 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 and 7-17 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 18-21 and 23-26 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 June 2003 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 31 October 2007.
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 31 October 2007 has been entered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 18-21 and 23-26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Oxland et al. (5,676,666; cited by applicant).

Oxland et al. disclose an elongate member 62 comprising planar retracting surfaces 72, 74, and removable guide members 80, 82 having lumens therewithin (see Fig. 1). The planar surfaces have a width that is greater than that of each guide. The lumens extend at an angle to one another. The device includes extension cleats 76 on a distal portion of the device, and the distal portion is disposed at an angle to the

proximal portion. The device attaches to a plate 10 having superior 36 and inferior 38 portions with holes 34 (see Figs. 2-8). When together, in a closed position, either blade can be considered to have a guide member with two barrels. It is noted that the claim recites at least one guide member and does not explicitly require two guide members. The hinge of the device constitutes a cross member and is capable of being used to connect two guide members (e.g., it can act as a support member for a connector, which also is not explicitly recited). Oxland discloses the claimed invention except for explicitly disclosing the angular range of about 110 to about 160, as between the proximal and distal portions of the device. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the device within a range of 110 and 160 degrees, since it has been held that where the general conditions of a claim are disclosed in the prior art, discovering the optimum or workable ranges involves only routine skill in the art. *In re Aller*, 105 USPQ 233. It also would have been obvious to make portions of the plate slidably movable, since it has been held that the provision of adjustability involves only routine skill in the art, and it would be desirable to properly position and fix the plate. *In re Stevens*, 101 USPQ 284 (CCPA 1954).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 31 October 2007 have been fully considered but are not persuasive.

Oxland et al. teaches two tissue distractor and guide *devices* connected by the cross connector, as set forth in the rejection. It is noted that the term "device" can

simply refer to each portion of the assembly of Oxland et al. In addition, at least a portion of the guide member is at a location proximal to a distal end of the elongate member, such that the distal end of the elongate member extends a distance beyond a distal-most end of the guide member. With regard to what the device is configured to rest against, it is noted that this amounts to a statement of intended use, and the device of Oxland et al. is capable of satisfying the same.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 1-4 and 7-17 are allowed.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to David Comstock whose telephone number is (571) 272-4710. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached at (571) 272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should

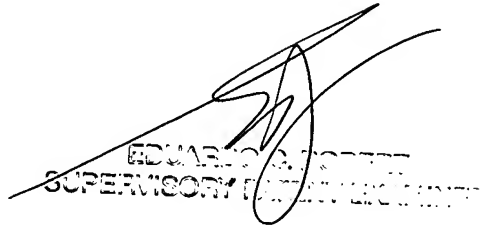
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you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic
Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



D. Comstock



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